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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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The following changes should be made:

1. Nizhni-Tagil, paragraph 4, should read Nizhniy Tagil.
2. Gorny, paragraph 8, should read Gorniy.
3. Starshi, paragraph 8, should read starshiy.
4. Beria, paragraph 14, should read Beriya.
5. Minister of the Interior, paragraph 14, should read Minister of Internal Affairs.

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Comments

Paragraph 3: June 27 may have been the date first heard of the outbreak of hostilities.

Paragraph 15, line 4: probably referring to the transfer of some functions from the MVD to the MGB.

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REPORT

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE OUTBREAK OF THE KOREAN WAR

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1. [] three incidents in the USSR which were evidently connected with the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. 50X1-HUM
2. Workers and employees at Plant No. 659 normally were paid between the 20th and the 23rd of each month. Paydays were delayed on a few rare occasions, but never later than the 25th or 26th of the month. In June 1950 [] failed to receive [] pay on time. [] paid on July 7 or 8. The same things occurred in all other Sverdlovsk enterprises; that is, salary payments for June were delayed until the early part of July. 50X1-HUM
3. Inasmuch as the Korean War began on June 27 [] this means that Soviet banks must have received directives to withhold payment of salaries which were based on the knowledge that the Korean War would soon begin. Perhaps this reflected some fear on the part of Soviet authorities that the attack in Korea could have brought about a general world war. Perhaps they ordered the delay of salary payments until the course of events immediately following the attack in Korea could be studied. 50X1-HUM
4. A second incident occurred in Sverdlovsk which can be interpreted as a precautionary move anticipating the outbreak of the Korean War. Approximately four weeks before the beginning of hostilities, all Volga Germans living in Sverdlovsk (with the exception of two university instructors [] were evacuated from Sverdlovsk on [] 50X1-HUM

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24- or 48-hours notice. They were sent to small towns in the Ural region. Many Volga Germans in Sverdlovsk were sent to Nizhni-Tagil, approximately 100 kilometers north of Sverdlovsk.

5. No one understood the reason for this minor deportation action at the time of its occurrence. It caused some speculation at our plant as three workers employed there were affected by the order. They were given but 48 hours to prepare for their forced transfer from Sverdlovsk.

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6. Both of these were extraordinary measures which had no parallel [redacted] they were precautionary measures designed to strengthen the internal situation in the USSR in the event that the Korean aggression had serious repercussions. The Soviet workers [redacted] did not recognize the significance of these moves. [redacted] they were far too naive to have realized their true meaning. [redacted]

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7. The third event concerned the only political arrest [redacted]

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DEPORTATION AND FATE OF VOLGA GERMANS

8. [redacted] two Volga Germans who were employed at the mining institute (Gorny Institut) in Sverdlovsk. [redacted] a man by the name of PENNER who was a physics instructor (starshi prepodavatel) at the institute. He had been a physics instructor at Moscow University prior to the war. VIBE, the second man, was a docent in thermodynamics at the institute and held the degree of candidate of technical sciences. [redacted] deportation of Volga Germans [redacted] Both of them had been affected by this action. [redacted]

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9. The Volga Germans were treated the same as all other Soviet citizens at the beginning of the war in 1941. They were drafted into the army and served as both officers and enlisted men. Then the NKVD [MVD] issued an order in the fall of 1941 [redacted] for the discharge of Volga Germans from the Soviet army and the deportation of all Volga Germans to the interior.
10. All Germans in the Volga republic and all Volga Germans living in other cities or serving in the Soviet army were deported at this time. None were left behind. Between a million and a million-and-a-half people deported.
11. [redacted] entire families were deported together. Men, women, and children were not separated. [redacted] PENNER, for example, was taken into custody while serving on the front and was returned to Moscow. He rejoined his wife and children there, and they were shipped to the east on the same deportation train.
12. Practically all Volga Germans were deported to East Kazakhstan. This is an area in the Kazakh SSR near Prokopyevsk. They were confined in concentration camps on first arriving in East Kazakhstan.

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Then they were quartered with peasants in scattered collective farms in this region. Life was very hard for them at first. Many succumbed to the hardships. The collective farmers were reluctant to accept them in their homes. And the kolkhoz chairmen were only concerned about their welfare if they were able to work. Later on, the men were taken off collective farm work and were sent to work in coal mines in the area of Prokopyevsk. [redacted] many died as a result of the deportation, [redacted] the number was large. 50X1-HUM

13. The overwhelming majority of Volga Germans remain to this day in their original deportation area; East Kazakhstan and the Prokopyevsk region. There they are subject to extraordinary restrictions on their freedom of movement. They are forbidden to travel outside the confines of the rayon in which they live. Violations of this regulation are punished by 25 years' forced labor. And they still must report each month to the police in their rayon of residence.
14. Only a very small percentage of the Volga Germans were allowed to take up residence elsewhere. All of these exceptions were intellectuals, mostly teachers, whose services were particularly needed elsewhere. This was true in the case of my two friends employed at the Sverdlovsk mining institute. PENNER's history is a case in point. As mentioned before, he was a physics instructor before the war. After his deportation, he first worked as an electrician in a Prokopyevsk coal mine. Then he was allowed to teach at a trade school in Prokopyevsk. Finally, after many petitions had been submitted to BERIA, the Minister of the Interior, PENNER received a residence [redacted] for the city of Sverdlovsk. 50X1-HUM
15. In Sverdlovsk, he was subject to the same restrictions as in the original deportation area. He was forbidden to leave the city limits of Sverdlovsk [redacted] and was required to report monthly to the MVD there. The MVD became the MGB after 1949 or 1950. The MVD required him to sign a statement testifying to his presence in the area. He had to obtain special permission from the same local authorities if professional duties required him to travel outside the city of Sverdlovsk. But even this permit only entitled him to travel in Sverdlovsk Oblast. If his job required him to take a trip outside the oblast, he had to obtain permission from Moscow. This man tried three times to obtain such permission but was unsuccessful in each attempt.
16. [redacted] intermarriage was 50X1-HUM
forbidden among the Volga Germans.

SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICAL PROBLEMS

17. It is, of course, a difficult task to characterize the attitudes of the Soviet population toward their government, particularly on the basis of one man's experiences. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
- [redacted] 50X1-HUM
18. [redacted] divide the Soviet urban population into three groups. First, there were the fanatical Communists who were thoroughly convinced of the truthfulness of Communist doctrine. This was a relatively small group which included, at the most, 20 per cent of the people [redacted]
- [redacted] Secondly, there was a small percentage of the intelligentsia who were opposed to the regime and who expressed their opinions [redacted] That is, they felt that they could trust [redacted] opposed to Communism. (However, [redacted] conversations [redacted])

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with these individuals on subjects critical of the regime were always undertaken with considerable caution by both parties. One was never sure if a friend was really a friend or a police agent.) It [redacted] that dissatisfaction with, or opposition to the Soviet regime among Soviet social elements varied in direct proportion to the group's position on the social ladder. 50X1-HUM

19. Third, the great mass of workers were both passive and naive. They were naive to the extent that they believed most information which was fed to them by the Soviet propaganda machine. Their lack of interest in political developments was a reflection of their passivity. [redacted] the great majority of the Soviet working class supported the Soviet government, albeit passively. Their very real dissatisfaction with housing conditions, high prices, and shortages of consumer goods was not directed against the government itself. They rationalized, for example, that present conditions did not permit a substantial improvement in living conditions. Stalin was considered a demigod by the average worker, as a man who could make no mistake. 50X1-HUM
20. [redacted] It was difficult to get any worker to express himself when sober. Some workers criticized their government in the harshest terms when they were drinking. It is significant that these comments came at a time when these individuals felt uninhibited. It may be concluded that even among many workers there were strong undercurrents of resentment against the government. 50X1-HUM
21. [redacted] the average worker did not consider Soviet elections to be politically significant. He certainly was not convinced that he was deciding his own fate by participating in an election. The average citizen regarded elections as an excuse to get drunk. Election day was a holiday in the USSR. A great deal of vodka was consumed, concerts were given, and dances organized. Better educated persons did not hesitate to criticize the election system. Some employees at the plant were fond of a little joke on this score. A person was offered a package of cigarettes with one cigarette in it and was told to "take your choice," referring to elections in a play on words. 50X1-HUM
22. Apparently the average Soviet citizen seldom expressed any doubts concerning the accuracy of news stories on world events and life abroad which appeared in the Soviet press. And the younger generation, particularly Komsomol members, were convinced that all information appearing in the Soviet press was true. However, some intellectuals [redacted] realized that much information was deliberately suppressed by the government and was not published. The same individuals attached little credibility to statistics published in the USSR which "demonstrated" the improvement of economic conditions.
23. The average worker must have realized that some items appearing in the Soviet press were out-and-out lies; for example, news reports that 100 per cent of the workers in a particular plant had enthusiastically volunteered a month's wages to a state loan. But oddly enough, the average individual did not seem to come to the conclusion, on the basis of such observations, that the Soviet press generally published distorted or false information. 50X1-HUM
24. The Soviet workers and employees [redacted] seemed to be particularly proud or satisfied with the fact that the Soviet system guaranteed a job for one and all. The Soviet citizenry also regarded free medical treatment as a positive contribution by the Soviet system. To be sure, this treatment was not very good. But it was free and available for everyone. Perhaps the third aspect of Soviet society which was a source of satisfaction was the knowledge that the Soviet state cared for the welfare of every worker and employee as long as he was capable of productive work. The welfare side of Soviet society was probably a compensation to many for the lack of personal freedom.

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25. Complaints about the state of affairs in the USSR were generally not directed against such basic considerations as police state terrorism, but were almost exclusively about the daily problems of making a living. Poor and crowded housing conditions, high prices, and shortages of consumer goods were inexhaustible subjects of complaint among the Soviet population. The absence of civil rights was apparently not discussed because they were all but unknown to the average citizen. At least this was true of the younger generation. [redacted]
26. [redacted] a few individuals, almost all of them members of the intelligentsia, whose doubts and dissatisfaction struck at the very foundations of the regime. [redacted] Volga Gern [redacted] 50X1-HUM [redacted] were convinced, in particular, that the Soviet state 50X1-HUM failed to guarantee the personal freedom of its citizens. They, of course, had had personal experiences which brought this point home.
27. The average Soviet citizen [redacted] was extremely critical of the United States. He repeated, and evidently believed the propaganda slogans which he was fed. As a result the Soviet citizenry had a completely false conception of the United States. They believed the Marxist thesis that capitalism produced a few rich people and masses of poverty-stricken workers. It was a widespread belief that there were armies of unemployed in the United States who existed at the minimum level of subsistence. Apparently most people felt that the lot of the worker in the United States was worse than in the USSR. 50X1-HUM
28. On the other hand, the Soviet man-on-the-street greatly respected America's technical achievements and capabilities. In fact, the Soviet population recognized the superior quality of consumer goods produced in the West and preferred them to domestic goods.
29. The average Soviet citizen was unable to conceive of life in the West. It was just like trying to describe color to a blind man when [redacted] 50X1-HUM attempted to describe living conditions there. [redacted] for example, that every fourth inhabitant in the United States had an automobile, they said that one can always lie with statistics. They knew from their own experiences that statistics could be used to prove anything.
30. The inhabitants of Sverdlovsk were shocked by the outbreak of the Korean War. They were extremely afraid that this action could lead to the outbreak of a third world war. [redacted] the 50X1-HUM day when hostilities in Korea were first announced. Many people said that the war had begun. A partial explanation of this reaction is the fact that the average Soviet citizen had a very hazy idea of world politics as they actually exist. He was not capable of analyzing and evaluating the course of world events.
31. This fear of a new war cropped up each spring among the Soviet population. There was always talk about "will we have war this year?" when May or June arrived. The Soviet population was very happy to see the advent of fall as they knew that probably no war would break out during the following six or eight months.
32. In my opinion, the Soviet man-on-the-street was convinced that if a new world war came, it would be the result of aggression by the West and not the result of Soviet initiative. 50X1-HUM
33. The overwhelming majority of the Soviet population was convinced that South Korea had begun the war. [redacted]

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Soviets [] always tried to convince [] that the North Koreans were a peace-loving people. 50X1-HUM

34. A few better informed Soviet [] --but they were a distinct minority--had serious doubts that North Korea had not begun the war.

[]

35. [] the majority of the Soviet population believed Soviet charges that the United States was conducting bacteriological warfare in Korea. But these accusations met with more disbelief than Soviet claims that South Korea had begun the war. Most members of the intelligentsia were among the skeptics. Many [] introduced points on their own initiative which argued against the Soviet claims. For example, they said that the United States would never have chosen the middle of winter to carry out bacteriological warfare if it really wished to do so. This made an impression on many educated Soviets. 50X1-HUM

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Comments: []

Several points call for critical comments. There is some logic to the [] assumption that the delay of wage payments in June 1950 and the evacuation of Volga Germans in May 1950 were precautionary measures anticipating the North Korean attack. Temporary withholding of wage payments might have contributed to internal stability in the event of general hostilities by preventing widespread panic buying and paving the way for rationing. On the other hand, it is equally possible that these events were simply coincidental. 50X1-HUM

Attention should be drawn to an error [] of the deportation of Volga Germans. [] Prokopyevsk in East Kazakhstan, whereas it in reality is found in the Kuznets Basin, some 300 miles distant. This indicates that the original deportation area was not confined to East Kazakhstan. 50X1-HUM

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